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FLOOR DEBATE

May 14, 2003

LB 407, 540

opposed nay. Record please, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: 24 ayes, 0 nays, Mr. President, to place the house under call.

SENATOR CUDABACK: The house is under call. All unauthorized personnel please leave the floor. Unexcused senators report to the Chamber. The house is under call. The house is under call. Senator Bromm, you may continue to close.

SPEAKER BROMM: Thank you, Mr. President. Appreciate the discussion and the debate this morning again. I think valid points were raised and discussed thoroughly. Appreciate Senator Beutler and Senator Wehrbein and others giving this a good deal of thought. And I know it's painful for them too. But I appreciate their support on the amendment. These are the kinds of decisions we're going to have to make a few more of yet before we're done here this year. But this is not insignificant. It is approximately a 35...or, \$29 million reduction in the mainline appropriation. Reduces that, with the Raikes amendment, by about \$29 million. So that, plus the prior amendment on the smoking program, gets us about \$35 million reduction. It's a hard sell from the standpoint of those who are very concerned about property tax. And we all are. But there are more good reasons to do this than not. The decision with regard to the levy, whether it's \$1.00, \$1.05, or \$1.03, or 99 cents, still ultimately lies with the local board. And I know in some cases they're going to feel terrific pressure, and they're going to feel like they've got no choice but to go to \$1.05. And in some cases that probably will be true. In others, however, I think it will not be true. And in some cases, it will force schools, once again, to examine the entire structure, look at some of their neighboring schools to see whether they can do anything to reduce expenditures. And I think that's what the public expects us all to do. I think that if we do this, we're just going to be one pretty big step closer to getting this thing put together. And I'm not sure what we're going to do yet on the revenue side. That will be up to all of us. I want to remind us that LB 540, which is Senator Raikes' bill, it's on Final Reading, if we do this, will come back with a proposal to insert the \$1.05. And I would encourage you not